

# Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

## "What's up with That, Gouverneur?"

Standard:

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environments
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

Grade Level:

9-12 (*Note: The teen brain responds well to movement, patterns, music, and dramatization*)

Objectives:

The student will:

- Design a flow chart on the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Develop ideas for dramatization from the letters of a Minister Plenipotentiary
- Share the importance of key players in America's early foreign affairs
- Reflect on the insights they have learned from the lesson

Time:

1.5–2 class periods

Materials:

Documents: **1789** *An Act Establishing a Department of Foreign Affairs*  
**1789** *The French Revolution Begins*  
**1792** *Reign of Terror*  
**1792** *Execution of Louis XVI*

Resources: *Images: Robert Morris and Gouverneur Morris*

Exercises: *Skit Planning Sheet*  
*Skit Dramatization Rubric*

Poster Board or Flip Charts  
Four sets of highlighters in four colors  
Additional markers  
Props brought in or made by students

Procedures:

### *Setting the Stage*

A statute added to the Constitution in July of 1789 created a Department of Foreign Affairs for the new nation. As part of the Executive Branch, this new department was to have a Secretary for the Department of Foreign Affairs.

In this lesson, students will study the document creating this department and will determine the working plan and roles of key officials in the department. As an example of how ministers to foreign countries will work within this department, letters from Gouverneur Morris who served as Minister Plenipotentiary to France, 1792–1794 will be studied. Already well known for long service during the Revolution and after, his letters and diaries (important American documents) became a valuable story of the French Revolution and other "affairs of state." These detailed stories can be easily presented in dramatizations.

1. Distribute the Document on *An Act Establishing a Department of Foreign Affairs* to each student.
2. Have students read quietly, highlighting roles and positions within the new department. (Students will have chosen from one of four different colored highlighters)
3. Based on color of marker chosen: group all blues in a group, all greens in a group, all yellows in a group, all oranges in a group equaling four groups. Give each group chart paper or a flip chart.
4. Each group is to design a flow chart of the workings and roles of each official in the new Department of Foreign Affairs. What do they officially do?
5. When finished, each group will present to the whole class their design and take questions about that design from their classmates and the teacher. What is left out?
6. The teacher will post these four designs in front of the classroom.

*Preparing for the Dramatizations*

As an example of how an American Minister Plenipotentiary carried out his assignment in these early years of the republic, have each of the four groups prepare a dramatization/melodrama of the events recorded by Gouverneur Morris in his role as Minister to France in 1792–1794,

1. Assign these roles within each group (or let group decide):
  - a. Gouverneur Morris
  - b. Louis XVI
  - c. Marie Antoinette
  - d. Thomas Jefferson
  - e. John Jay
  - f. A drummer
  - g. A "Crier" who says at key points: "What's Up With That, Gouverneur?"
  - h. A narrator/director

If more roles are needed, choose Robert Morris, the mentor of Gouverneur Morris (not related) and/or a French soldier. Show resource, *Images: Robert Morris and Gouverneur Morris*.

2. For homework or possible computer lab time have students research the characters they are assigned in relation to Gouverneur Morris' letters. Distribute the letters. Ask them to think of their part in a dramatization of these stories. Suggest they bring props or simple costume accessories for their group's play on Day 2. (For example: gazettes, drum, liberty pole, *Liberté* poster, peg leg, cent/dollar) Give each group the rubric that will be used for evaluation.

*Dramatization Time*

- 1.** Each group will be asked to use the skit planning sheet to make sure their play is organized, discussing each person's part in the dramatization and recording what will happen at each step.
- 2.** Each group will then be given equal time to present their dramatization and will be evaluated by teacher with the attached rubric.
- 3.** After all four presentations, students will look again at the original design for the Department of Foreign Affairs and, recalling Morris' letters, then write a short reflection on:

*Describe how Gouverneur Morris carried out the statute defining the role of "minister" in the Department of Foreign Affairs.*

- 4.** Teacher will collect reflections and skit planning sheets and ask students to help put everything back in order. ■